

# Implementing solutions in practice

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# Overview



- The intention-behaviour gap
- How to bridge the gap
- How to sustain physical activity habits

# Behaviour change is hard.



# Let's reflect

1. What is one health behaviour you would like to change?
2. Set a small goal relating to this change
3. What excuses might your mind come up with to talk you out of your goal?



# Common barriers



- Lack of motivation
- Lack of energy
- Lack of time
- Other priorities and obligations
- Lack of money
- Lack of transport
- Illness or disability
- Lack of interest
- Perceived lack of benefit
- Lack of suitable environments or facilities
- Discordance with culture, identity
- Fear, anxiety
- Embarrassment, shyness
- ?

# Where do we go wrong?



Knowledge is all that's  
needed

*I'll just tell them that they  
need to be physically active  
to be healthy and they will go  
for a walk.*



It's all about messaging

*I just need to say the right  
things, at the right time and  
in the right way.*



It's common sense

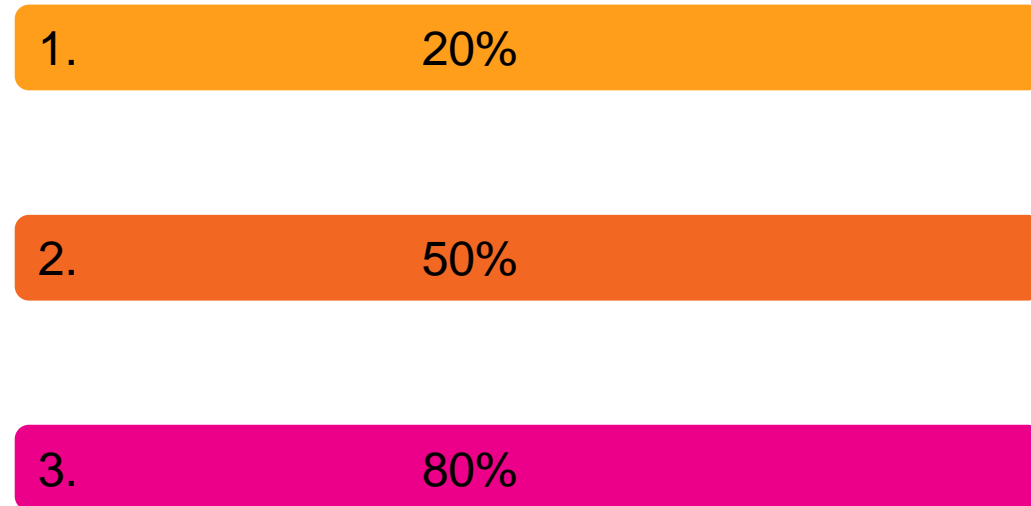
*Doesn't everyone know  
they should exercise?*

*Don't you want your  
symptoms to resolve?*

# The intention-behaviour gap



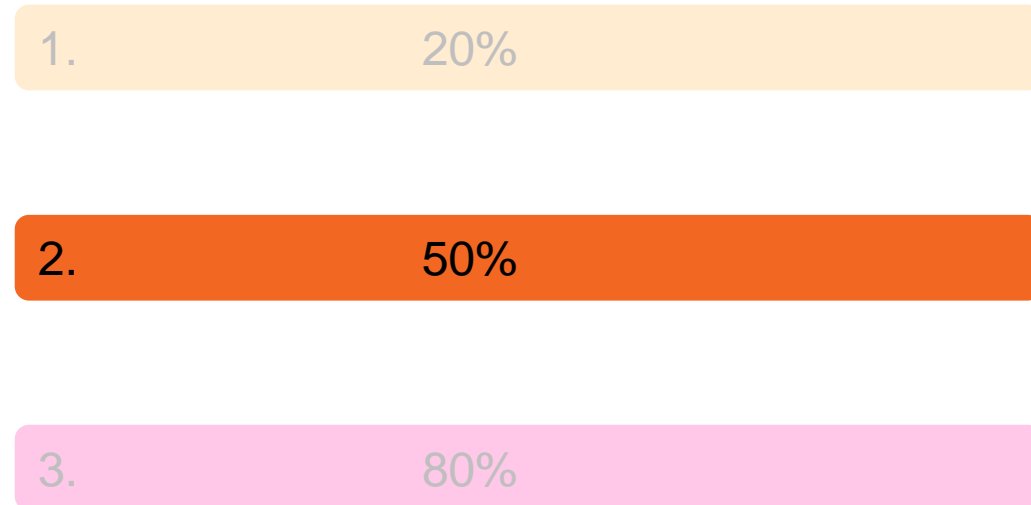
**Poll: How big is the intention-behaviour gap?**



# The intention-behaviour gap



## Poll: How big is the intention-behaviour gap?



In a recent systematic review, the overall intention-behaviour gap was 47.6%, meaning that almost half of all intenders are not able to fulfil their intentions

Feil K, et al. Br J Sports Med 2023



# The intention-behaviour gap



**How can we help people to bridge the gap?**



Thought



Planning



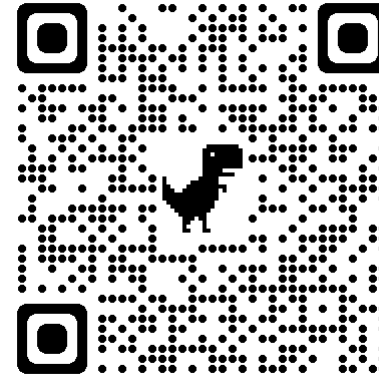
Self-regulation



# The M-PAC framework

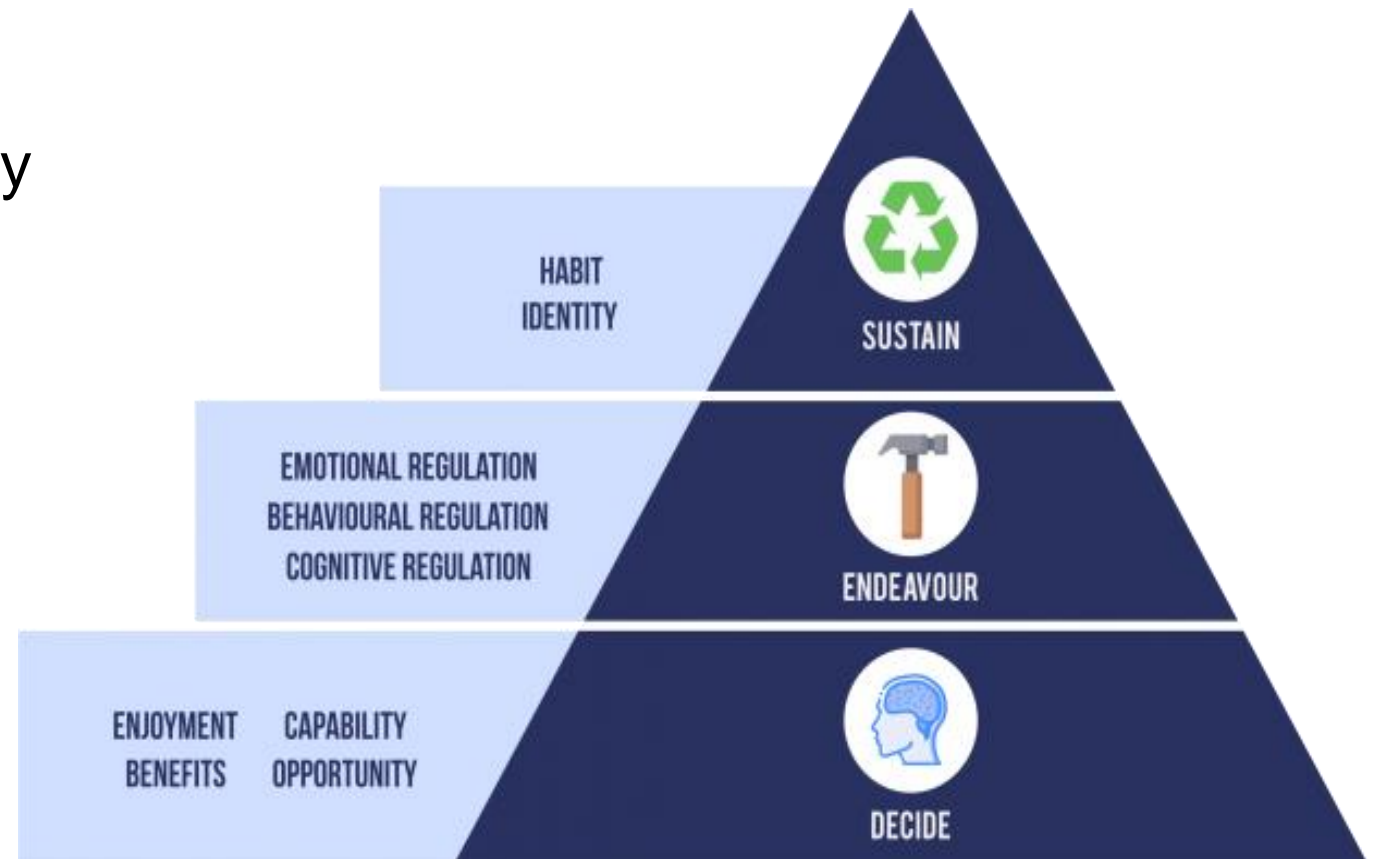
Multi-Action Process Control

Dr. Ryan Rhodes, University of Victoria, Canada



Designed to address intention-behaviour gap in physical activity

1. Decide
2. Endeavour
3. Sustain



# Step 1. Decide

- Set your intentions
- How can you help?
  - ☐ Readiness for change

<https://lifestylemedicine.org.au/content/is-your-patient-ready-for-change/>

- ☐ The importance of enjoyment
- ☐ Opportunities



What are some things you **like** to do?

Are there activities you'd **like** to be able to do?



# Step 2. Endeavour

- Identify tactics to translate intentions into behaviour
- How can you help?
  - ☐ Habit tracking
  - ☐ Set (SMART) goals
  - ☐ Help them understand barriers
  - ☐ Establish incentives and rewards



What?  
When?  
How?

Can I do this anyway,  
even though my mind is  
giving me lots of  
excuses not to?



# Step 3. Sustain

- Making the behaviour part of your life and regular routine
- How can you help?
  - ☐ Combine with an existing habit
  - ☐ Ensure goals are achievable
  - ☐ Gradually increase difficulty/complexity



<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/mpac/wp-content/uploads/sites/3020/2018/03/Exercise-intentions-man-ethnic-Spread-image.jpg>

# Challenges for health professionals

This looks a time-consuming approach

- Take it one step at a time, e.g. plant a seed
- Have some referral options
- Have some resources available (e.g. M-PAC worksheets)




This looks like a long-term approach



# Take home messages

- Half of us struggle to turn intentions into behaviours
- Start small and achievable
- Show compassion



*Behaviour  
change is hard  
(but not  
impossible)*

# Thanks!



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